

Application SN 10/072,380
Amendment Dated: January 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action of: January 12, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Amended) An upper gearset support for the upper shaft and gear and clutch assembly of a marine transmission stern drive unit ~~located in~~ having a housing having an upper and lower case, said support comprising:

(a) a generally axial body dimensioned to extend substantially the length of the upper case ~~body~~ and defining an internal bore to receive the drive shaft, said body having an upper and a lower end, said upper end configured to receive the upper gearset and clutch assembly;

(b) a first retainer located ~~[[on]]~~ adjacent the upper end of said body;

(c) a second retainer thereon spaced from said first retainer located adjacent the lower end; and

(d) and at least one of said retainers being axially adjustable relative to said body to secure said support in engagement with said housing with said retainers engaging said upper case.

2. (Amended) The upper gearset support of Claim 1 ~~further including~~ wherein said first retainer includes a flange extending from said body.

Application SN 10/072,380
Amendment Dated: January 29, 2004
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3. (Previously presented) The upper gearset support of Claim 1 wherein said flange defines at least one bore.

4. (Previously presented) The upper gearset support of Claim 1 wherein said bore is threaded to receive a fastener.

5. (Amended) The upper gearset support of Claim 1 wherein said body is fabricated from materials selected from the group consisting of ~~4140, 4130, 4340, 8640, or 300M~~ chrome moly steel and stainless steel.

6. (Previously presented) The upper gearset support of Claim 1 wherein both said retainers are adjustable relative to said body.

7. (Previously presented) The upper gearset support of Claim 1 wherein said at least one retainer being adjustable relative to said body is attached at mating threads and is axially adjustable therealong.

8. (Previously presented) The upper gearset support of Claim 1 wherein the upper end of said bore defines a bearing receiving area.

Application SN 10/072,380
Amendment Dated: January 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action of: January 12, 2004

9. (Previously presented) The upper gearset support of Claim 1 wherein the upper end of said bore carries a bearing cup.

10. (Previously presented) The upper gearset support of Claim 1 wherein said second
5 retainer is located at the lower end of said body and has a surface configuration conforming to the peripheral surface area of the upper case which it engages.

11. (WITHDRAWN) A method of modifying a marine stern drive unit of the type having an upper and lower case in which is mounted an upper shaft and gear and clutch
10 assembly which drives a propeller shaft, said method comprising:

(a) providing support having:

- (i) a generally axial body dimensioned to extend substantially the length of the upper case, said body having an upper end and a lower end and having a bore to receive the drive shaft, said upper
15 end configured to receive the upper gearset and clutch assembly;
- (ii) said body having first and second retainer thereon, at least one of said retainers being axially adjustable relative to said body;

(b) removing the drive shaft;

(c) machining the upper case to accept the support;

Application SN 10/072,380
Amendment Dated: January 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action of: January 12, 2004

- (d) installing the support and securing it to the upper case at said retainers;
- (e) installing the drive shaft, bearing, clutch and gear assembly and connecting them to the propeller shaft; and
- (f) replacing the top cover on the upper case.